

# Skunk

Many species of wildlife are found in Cook County. They are year round residents of our county and for the most part are welcomed visitors to our properties. Sometimes wildlife end-up in places that, are not safe for them or for the people or pets that may come in contact with them.

The first step in dealing with wildlife is to take steps to prevent many of the most common problems involved with wild animals around our homes. Sometimes a problem will need a solution when it cannot be prevented.

People remember encounters with skunks whether they are sprayed or not. It takes a lot to get a skunk upset enough for them to want to spray in defense. They can be active all year but will remain in dens through the cold spells. Be alert when walking a dog, because they tend to ignore the warnings signs.

Skunks can be carriers of rabies. Possible signs are uncoordinated movements or seizures. If you suspect that a skunk may be acting in an unusual manner call your local animal control agency to remove the animal.

## Helpful Hints

- Close garbage dumpster lids each night to prevent wildlife from falling into dumpster.
- If an adult, child or dog is sprayed consider using this solution for odor removal. Mix 1 quart 3% hydrogen peroxide solution, ¼ cup baking soda, and 1 teaspoon liquid soap. Do not add water. This solution can be used to wash skin, clothes

- and dogs that have been sprayed. Peroxide, may lighten the fur of pets.
- Check the sides of your home to repair any access points. Skunks use openings under concrete slabs & porches, crawl spaces under a home, garages or sheds as den areas.
- Skunks are omnivores (eat plant and animal material). They may be attracted to garbage or pet food left outside.
- Skunks are most often seen at dusk and early morning. They usually avoid conflict but, when threatened, the animal will raise its tail and stamp its front feet. If the danger does not back off, the skunk can twist its body and spray the threat.
- A strong smelling substance such as household ammonia-soaked rags may persuade the skunk to leave a burrow under a building or porch because of the strong smell.
- Skunks are poor climbers with weak eyesight and can sometimes tumble into window wells and become trapped. To remove the animal, place a rough board or something that gives the animal traction and is long enough to serve as a ramp out of the well. Since skunks are poor climbers it should lean no steeper than a 45 degree angle. Slowly & carefully place the object into the window well. Keep people and pets away from the area. At nightfall, the skunk should leave. Install covers over window wells to prevent this occurrence.
- When a skunk has made a garage or shed their home the door giving them access outside should be left open before dusk so that they can leave.
- Sometimes it may be necessary to trap the animal for removal from an area. In this case you will need the assistance of a nuisance wildlife control operator to trap and remove the animal. There is usually a fee associated with this service.
- In Illinois, skunks are protected by law. If an individual wants to trap a skunk you will need to call the Illinois Department of Natural Resources District Wildlife Biologist to request an animal removal permit. This type of permit comes with very specific regulations that you as the permitted trapper must follow.
- For additional information check the website University of Illinois Extension – Living With Wildlife in Illinois (<http://web.extension.illinois.edu/wildlife>)



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